

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE UNITED STATES FOR THE
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF ALABAMA, EASTERN DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)	
)	CRIMINAL ACTION NO.
v.)	3:19cr129-MHT
)	(WO)
JAMES BLAIN EATON)	

ORDER

On April 16, 2019, defendant James Blain Eaton was charged in a revocation petition with five violations of his conditions of supervised release. The question before the court is whether he has the mental capacity to stand for a hearing on the federal petition, that is, whether he is currently suffering from a mental disease or defect rendering him mentally incompetent to the extent that he is unable to understand the nature and consequences of the proceedings against him or to assist properly in his defense. See 18 U.S.C. § 4241(a). Based on the evidence presented at a hearing on the petition on January 19, 2022, the court finds that he has the mental capacity to stand trial.

While this federal revocation petition was pending, and with regard to some state charges, a state court

found Eaton incompetent to stand trial based on a March 2020 competency evaluation conducted by Dr. Catherine Boyer, who opined that Eaton's manic symptoms "interfere[d] significantly with his ability to communicate meaningfully about his case and more generally." Forensic Psychological Evaluation (Doc. 18) at 7. Subsequently, the state court found Eaton competent to stand trial based on an August 2021 competency evaluation performed by Dr. Boyer. Dr. Boyer opined that Eaton had "notably improved" since the prior evaluation and that his manic symptoms no longer presented "a serious obstacle to communicating about legal options and engaging ... in the decision making process about how to proceed." Forensic Psychological Evaluation (Doc. 19) at 5.

In December 2021, after Eaton had come back into federal custody, Dr. Boyer prepared a psychological report in this case, based on a psychological evaluation of Eaton on November 23, 2021. During her testimony on the pending federal revocation petition on January 19,

2022, she stated that she has no reason to reevaluate her opinion in August 2021 that Eaton is competent. She testified that, when she met with Eaton in November 2021, he presented similarly to how he appeared during the August 2021 evaluation. Neither she nor counsel for either party had reason to believe that Eaton's mental condition has deteriorated or that there is any current concern as to his competency.

Therefore, based upon Dr. Boyer's psychological evaluations and her testimony on January 19, 2022, and pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 4241(a), the court concludes that Eaton is not currently suffering from a mental disease or defect such that he is unable to understand the nature and consequences of the proceedings against him or to assist properly in his defense.

Accordingly, it is ORDERED and DECLARED that defendant James Blain Eaton was, and is, mentally

competent to stand for the hearing on the federal
revocation petition (doc. 3) against him.

DONE, this the 19th day of January, 2022.

/s/ Myron H. Thompson
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE